Regulation for Importing Soya Oil

5420. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Agriculture has laid down the rules stating that all imported Soyabean oil should be genetically non-modified.

(b) if so, when these rules are likely to be enforced on consignments of imported Soya oil;

(c) whether distinguishing the genetically modified soya oil from the conventional (non-modified) soya oil is immensely difficult through tests; and

(d) if so, how Government propose to enforce the new regulations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Agriculture has not laid down any guidelines/rules regarding import of genetically modified Soyabean oil. The import of genetically modified product is governed by Rules framed under Environment Protection Act, 1986 which is handled by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Rule 11 of the Rules for the Manufacture, Use, import, export and storage of Hazardous Micro-organisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells 1989 notified under EP Act 1986, provides that food stuffs, ingredient in food stuffs and additives including procesing aids containing or consisting of genetically engineered organisms or cells, shall not be produced, sold, imported or used except with approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC).

Distinction between genetically modified soyabean oil and non genetically modified soyabean oil is not possible by available analytical methods when the oils are refined. When oils are non refined very sophisticated and sensitive methods like Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) may enable the distinction.

The GEAC is functioning under the Ministry of Environment and Forests to examine and issue clearance, on case to case basis, in proposals regarding production, sale, import or use of substances and products including food stuffs, ingredients in food stuffs and additives includding processing aids containing GM organisms. The GEAC takes decision after referring the proposals to experts and obtaining their views.